

# DESIGN

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School Exhibition—Pupils of the Art Institute of Chicago

## **FREEDING THE CREATIVE POWER OF THE INDIVIDUAL THROUGH THE MAKING OF POTTERY**

*Myrtle M. French*

*Art Institute of Chicago*

THE longer a thoughtful person teaches art the more that person realizes that one of the most important functions of the art educator is to free the creative powers of the individual. Practically everybody is endowed with the creative instinct to a greater or less degree; the problem is to release it. There are at least three major factors which tend to hamper its free expression. Probably the lack of a real message is of most importance among adults—children seldom have that difficulty—fear is second and lack of a basis for criticism third.

The first is most apparent when planning the decoration and next while creating form. Usually students can think of objects they wish to make and ordinarily they have an idea of the form preferred, but a good decoration seems to be more difficult. The usual crutch is a book or magazine containing illustrations which they can adapt.

For several years, experiments have been carried on in the pottery classes at the Art Institute of Chicago, attempting to use as subject matter for design the students' daily experiences and bits of the city or surrounding country, resolved into very simple pattern.

The results have been quite gratifying. Not every piece

produced has been a work of art by any means, but there has been the great satisfaction of knowing that what was done was an original creation—a great boon to the self-respect of the creator—and that there have been at least as many pieces of real beauty as were produced in a class allowed to adapt or copy designs.

By this method the student can think of so much to say in his design that the first difficulty is removed. To be sure, other minor problems arise—such as which message shall be used, what detail shall be eliminated, how to put the message into an orderly, pleasing, pattern instead of a semi-realistic confusion, etc. But all these are so much a part of teaching design that it is a joy to be confronted by them in a real, honest-to-goodness, live problem. When a student lacks ideas for a shape, various simple type forms may be combined for suggestions. This often brings creative and beautiful forms. For instance, one student combined a circle at the bottom with an horizontal oval on top, then added handles in such a way that the entire mass made a vertical oval. From that suggestion she designed an unusually interesting vase. Awful things, as well as fine ones, can grow from such suggestions unless care is taken that the result has real beauty instead of only being "unique."

Fear may take several forms, fear of the material and its technique, fear of not making what the teacher likes, fear of not pleasing the group with whom working, etc.

An attempt has been made to conquer the first fear by having the class pinch the clay into many shapes for five or



School Exhibition—Pupils of the Art Institute of Chicago

ten minutes and then directing them to pretend they are children for the next ten minutes while they model an animal or bird. A few do very well but still many are afraid. Next they are directed to become children again for fifteen minutes and make a tile-like plaque telling of a memory of childhood. (The shortness of time forces them to forget themselves.) By the time this is finished all are beginning to feel more free. Next, the first real problem is assigned, consisting of five small tiles—each to be decorated by a different method. The point is forever emphasized that they are dealing with mere “scraps” of clay and that no harm whatever is done if a mistake makes it necessary to start again. The students are required to work directly into the clay, thinking and feeling out the designs as they proceed—letting the material suggest all it may. If they can be made to work fearlessly, on the first little problems, the victory is nearly won. Even tho important pieces are made later, the habit of being unafraid is well started and a little further encouragement will win out. The next fear mentioned may be uprooted by making the students realize that they should be working to create a thing of beauty not to please a teacher or class mate, and that they themselves are the creators and final judges of the piece.

At this point, the teacher's opportunity lies in giving the student a basis for criticism. The easiest way to teach is to give a definite criticism with direction for changing, but the most helpful and intelligent way is to get the student to make his own criticism—a thing practically always possible. If he can not by any hook or crook be led to discover his own mistake, the class can do it for him. For instance, the instructor is shown a vase, or a drawing for one, and asked the question: “Is that all right?” The vase is bounded by full curves practically throughout except that the lines of the handles are very straight and angular. If the student is asked: “Do you like it?” probably the answer will be in the negative. If asked why, probably she will know the handles are wrong. By thoughtful questioning she can be

led to say the handles are too angular for the body of the vase. Here the instructor has the opportunity to emphasize and apply the principles of unity of line and form. Perhaps another student will plan a piece in which the handles lead the eye away from the main body and in no way suggest a return to the center of interest. Doubtless the student can be led to say that the handles are wrong—perhaps that “they extend too far”—which gives a chance to emphasize the principle that any piece with all its parts must form a beautiful unit which gives the feeling of a whole. And so on endlessly through form and pattern the students may be made to apply the principles of design to their own creations, until at last they are freed with a wealth of material to express, a directness and assurance of technique and a basis for criticism.

*Extract from the Journal of the American Ceramic Society*

A tile problem was given, the design of which was to represent some personal experience treated symbolically. The tile was to have a beautiful pattern for both observer and creator, but to the latter it must have a significance which might or might not be apparent to the former. The pattern *must not* be a picture, but a symbol. Already the students had known of the Indian symbolism and were urged to catch that spirit in expressing their own lives by their *own* symbols. The architectural plan of each pattern was first chosen and then the fun began. A few knew exactly what they wanted to say, but most of them floundered for a time. By the end of the first lesson nearly every member had made a good start. When the tiles were completed they were the best set ever produced in any class by a similar group, and many said they had enjoyed making them more than any other design.

The following year a plate design in the same spirit was added to the tile problem, but the subject matter as suggested was to be a national institution instead of a personal experience. Quite a list was given, some of broad scope and some of narrower, with a chance to choose a different sub-





Fig. 1

FIG. 1.—Symbolizes an auto trip. Explanation: In the center is a tourist camp with a fire around which are eight tourist tents. Outside that is the road (in white) with gas stations at intervals. Farther out are symbols of mountains and foothills, some of which are wooded. Between them is the sun. In each corner of the square center is a spot representing "the places we didn't get to see." The border symbolizes watermelon and other fruit eaten along the way.

FIG. 2.—Colored glazes. An incised line separated the colors. It symbolizes the most important experiences in the life of the student. Explanation: The central flower-like form symbolizes the family of



Fig. 2

five as a center. Grouped next to it are the schools attended before going to the Art Institute of Chicago. The largest dark spots suggesting the shape of a building represent the Art Institute. Between them is a mountain in Colorado on top of which is a cabin. The larger points at the border represent the mountains, the smaller ones, foot-hills. The isolated black spots symbolize a special hill.

FIG. 3.—Blue slip on cream colored clay, and glazed with a colorless transparent glaze. Symbolizes a visit to Hull House Settlement in one of the foreign centers of Chicago. Explanation: In the middle is represented a crowded center. Around it



Fig. 3

are four street booths in which fat women are waving their arms to attract sales. Between the booths are fruit baskets, over the baskets the Jewish star, and on each side of the star are old ash cans. Over the roof of the booth is the sign of the three balls. Around the central medallion is a border of cheeses hanging in the shop windows along the street. The heaviest dark border toward the edge, represents Mrs. French's little bungalow home built on the roof of the Boy's Club at Hull House as main spots. From it can be seen the city as a mass, above which are chimneys and water tanks. The outside border symbolizes the sun half-hidden by the atmosphere and clouds of smoke hanging over the city.

ject if desired. The following is an outline:

1. *Transportation*. Symbolized by a movement in a particular direction: (a) aeroplane, (b) steamer, (c) electric, (d) horse, (e) auto, (f) rail, and (g) bicycle.

2. *Industries*. Symbolized by a feeling of growth, probably upward: (a) mining, (b) agriculture, (c) manufacturing, (d) construction, and (e) municipal activities.

3. *Business*. Symbolized by repetition: (a) merchant, (b) baker, (c) laundryman, and (d) restaurant.

4. *Industrial Arts*. Symbolized by more delicacy: (a) printing, (b) weaving, (c) blacksmithing, (d) cabinet making, and (e) pottery.

5. *Day Labor*. Symbolized by strength of the individual: (a) street cleaning, (b) street repairing, (c) ditch digging, and (d) teaming.

In working out this problem most of the students took material of much narrower scope than outlined, such as apple industry or the growth of plants in a conservatory. Only the more intellectual ones tackled the broader subjects. One attractive plate design represented immigration, the home land in the center, the voyage across the ocean to the new country at the border.

Students in pottery never having had design have been given the idea of the personal experience with good results. Without art training a beginner is usually scared because he has nothing to say, but when he can tell his own story by means of symbols instead of pictures, often he is freed. Many people have a feeling for the architectural plan of a design, and usually that is all the beginner of design has. With the added possibilities of symbolizing something from personal experience, a good decoration often follows, otherwise a design suited to embroidery, advertizing, woodcarving, or metal would be copied and the result would be unsatisfactory.

In using this idea for teaching, the first difficulty the

instructor has to face is the impulse of the student to picture the experience, because he knows pencil and paper but does not know clay. He will soon discover clay and get a feeling for his material, if the instructor insists upon a bold, direct handling of the clay. The second difficulty is, that the student gets so interested in the picture (or symbol, when he has caught the spirit) that he forgets the pattern. By making him criticize his own tile for pattern and work with it bottom side up or corner-wise, he gets an original, live pattern of his own invention. This is, generally as good as, and usually better than, what he could produce by a rehashing of the expressions of an unknown people with different ideals, no matter how beautiful that expression has been. He has said something and he has said it in his own way, a great triumph over a mechanical copy or a weak reiteration of what some one else said beautifully.

If the subject matter of the natural expression of a child is observed it will be noticed that it is his own experience in some form, his every day life, his imagination or stories or pictures, which have held his interest. Through a study of the best primitive art it is found that the patterns invariably symbolize something vital. The art of the Mexican schools, which developed such fine expression, was founded upon seven symbols of their lives. Some of the finest old Persian rugs are symbols of the plan and activities of the little village where the rug was made. And so we could continue indefinitely. American industrial art, as a whole, has become mechanical and devitalized. It is up to us as educators and producers to give our art expression, a soul which will make it live.

♦ ♦ ♦

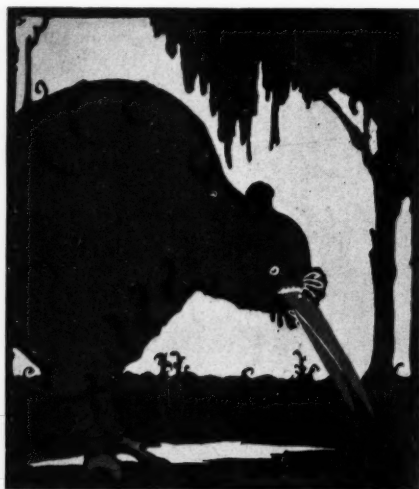
#### EDITORIAL NOTE

The color supplement in this issue is taken from the article which appeared in the March issue on "New Surface Patterns" by Adelaide Everson.

DESIGN



H. Hayden



Agnes Ryan



M. Walsworth



Miss Goodenough



J. E. Pilbeam



Ruby A. Wilcox



B. M. Cleveland

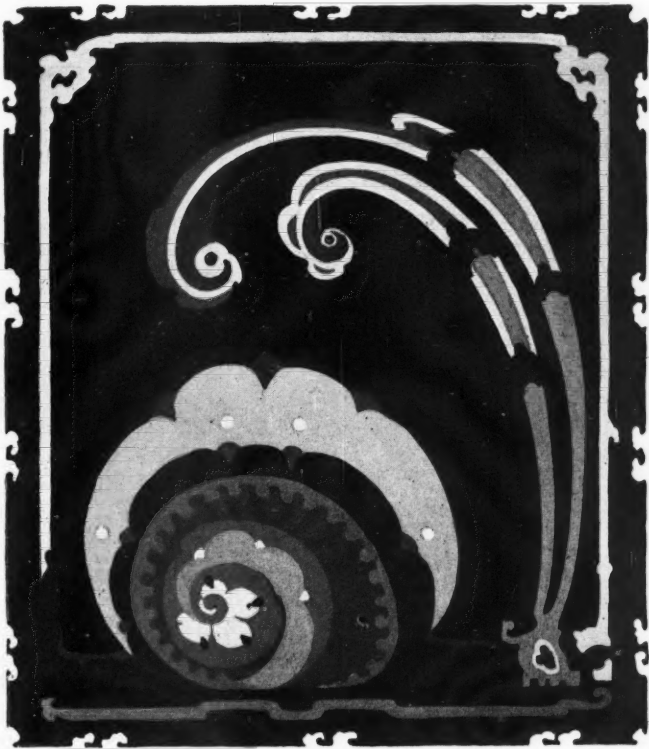


H. Snyder



P. W. Roedell





Cover Insert—Mabel E. Northrop

## INSERT PANELS FOR MAGAZINE COVERS

Mabel E. Northrop, Instructor

1926 Summer School, Syracuse University

THE final problem in any class work should properly express the objections of the course through the individual interpretation of the problem by the student enrolled. It should also be a culmination; a proper finish to time well spent; a flowering upon the plant-like growth of the seedling happily planted and cultivated by the instructor. Such, in result, we believe the accompanying panels to be.

The problem, as assigned, was to be in proportion to a given oblong, and suitable for reproduction, in color, as an insert on the cover of a certain helpful little publication, gotten out by a well known water-color and crayon manufacturing house. Different issues of this magazine with varied inserts were shown to the class and, through the courtesy of the publisher, each student received a copy carrying, as insert, our own design, snail motif; the original drawing of which we were also able to show. With both the design and its reproduction before them the students felt that the problem had taken on reality and incentive.

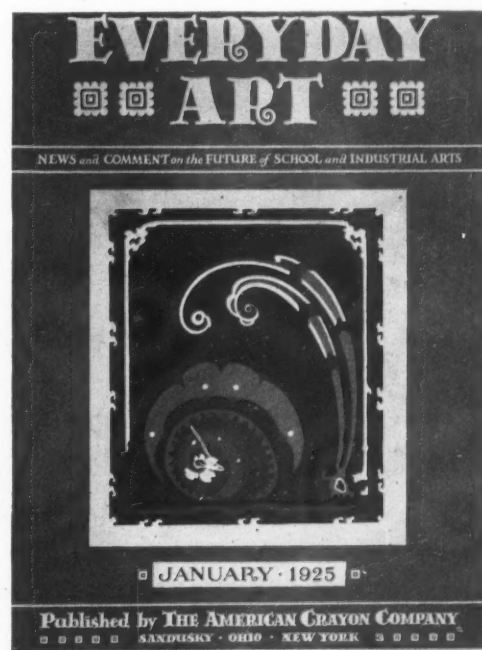
The motif or *point of departure*, as the impressionists say, was to be of the animal kingdom,—bird, insect, beast or fish. Material for the individual selection of motifs was obtained from many sources, among them town and campus libraries and DESIGN—Keramic Studio Magazine.

As the individual is the sum total of his heredity and his experiences, so is self-expression, in whatever form it may take, the evidence of such combined influences. Not too earnestly, then, can we urge the practice of absorption and assimilation of beauty everywhere, in line, dark and light and color, whether of sea or sky, Oriental rug or vase. Nature, historic ornament, the geometric,—all are grist to the mill of the true observer and genuine lover of beauty. Not alone does it enrich his own living but his self-expression is evidence of that enrichment and takes on creative

quality. In this problem the appeal was made for an effort toward the creative but with the thought that none of the fundamental facts concerning the natural form of the motif selected should be violated. Pattern adhering to principles, already studied in the previous work of the course, was the end sought. Especially stressed was the value of *principality*. Dominance in some of its parts was demanded that the composition might demonstrate a center of interest. Occult balance, rhythm and harmony in line, dark and light and color, had each its proper consideration. A choice of either analogous or one of the complementary color harmonies was allowed. As previous problems had been done in cut paper, a nice feeling for clean cut, definite forms had been developed and its influence showed plainly in the first pencil outline drawings submitted for criticism.

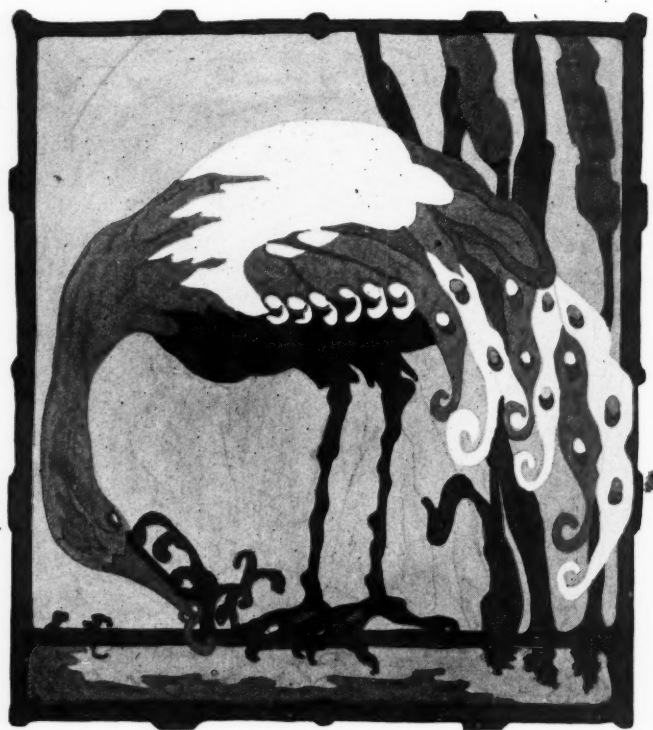
The quality of these first drawings was gratifying when one considered the duration of the course and lack of any great amount of previous professional training. "Hard work and plenty of it," seemed to be the will of the entire personnel of this class. With a total of nineteen plates, exercises and projects in the first five weeks they came to this twentieth task with a fine determination to make it the best. We pay tribute to that spirit with its tangible results. There was a rather unusual rhythmic line manifest at the outset and further developed in its dark and light and color.

Sample books carrying some ninety tones, five values each of eighteen different hues helped greatly in the choice of colors to be matched in tempera for the finished design. From the accepted pencil drawings careful tracings were made and further traced on illustrator's board, due regard being had as to proper margins. Careful execution brought the problem to its successful culmination. We believe that many show an interesting originality, some lack in that quality but in none do we find distorted ugliness posing as creative or unique at the expense of beauty and truth. Neither was immutable law violated. The bird is still bird-like, the grasshopper himself, plus what the student had to offer as her interpretation,—so with toad, fish, butterfly, lobster and all the rest.





R. Carpenter



Belle M. Chase



Mary E. Francisco



Elsie J. Clute





M. C. Karg



S. E. Seager



Lois Reynolds

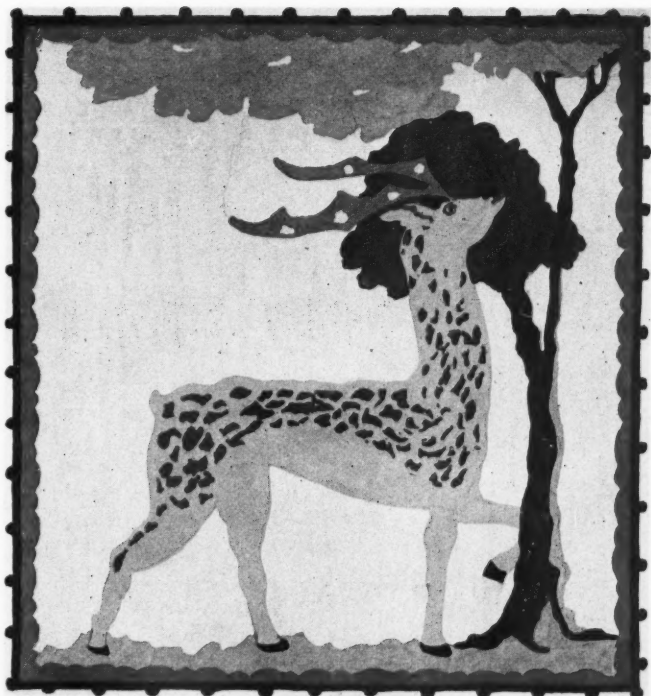


E. M. Brown



Work in Design and Applications—Syracuse University Summer School, M. Northrop, Instructor





Anne Glickstein



Isabel Shoudy

Inserts for Magazine Covers—Syracuse University Summer School, M. Northrop, Instructor

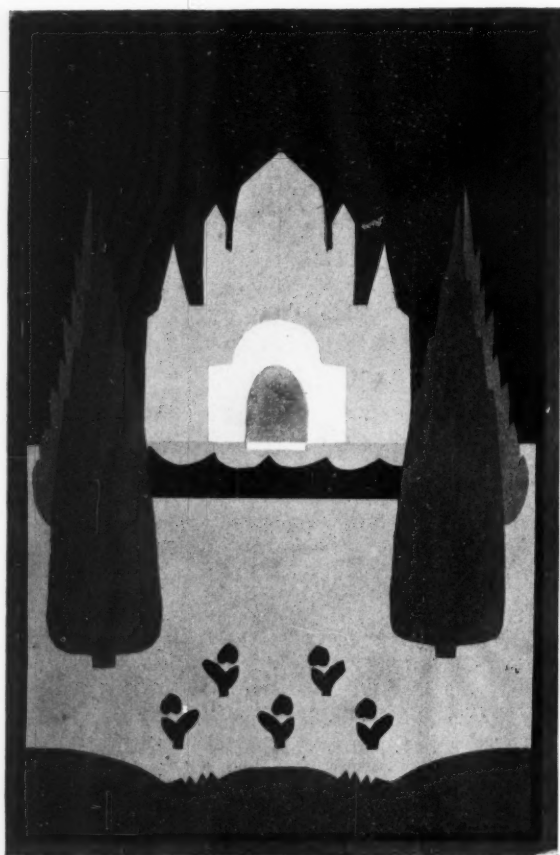
#### PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Beginning with the May issue, the first number of the twenty-ninth volume, DESIGN—Keramic Studio will be mailed in envelopes and flat, instead of being rolled as it has been heretofore. We believe the Magazines sent in this

way will reach their destinations in better condition. The publishers will appreciate expressions from subscribers as to this change and letting them know the condition of the Magazine after going through the mail in this new way.



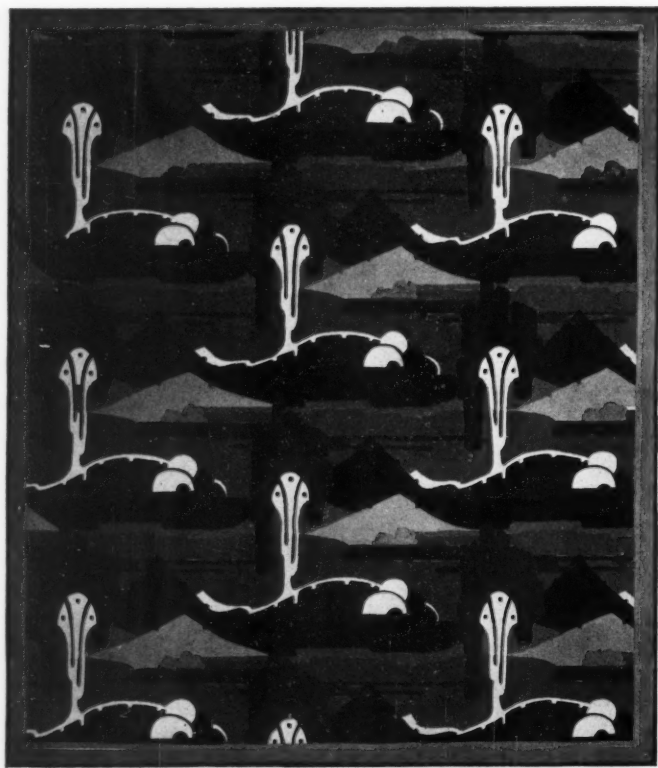
Students' Designs Applied in Gesso—Syracuse University Summer School, M. Northrop, Instructor



Cut Paper Panel—Maude Graham



Batik Panel—William Risley



Textile Design—A. de Girolamo



Textile Design—E. Rodriguez

Work of Students in Fawcett Night School—M. Donkersloot, Instructor





Lamps—W. K. Titze

## LAMPS

W. K. Titze

THE BUDHA lamp is of Satsuma and decorated as follows. The face and hands and body exposed are left the Satsuma. The hair is painted black with a bright colored jewel. Part of the drapery, that is the part over the shoulders and down the back and arms is covered with Roman Gold and a bright colored design, in spots, about it. The balance of the figure is to be carried out in one or more of the colors used in the small design motives on the gold. This is placed upon a teakwood stand with the rod holding the shade running up the back. The shade is a strong red with an orange red lining and it is finished with red and black braid with red beads at given points. When lighted this shade casts a red glow over the figure. A red light bulb will add to the charm of this little lamp placed on a low table in a corner or upon a writing desk or table. The lamp in the lower left hand corner is a pleasing one for the bed chamber. We learn in the study of design, that two spaces of equal weight placed beside each other, is bad. Therefore, a shade that is brought down over the base, so far, that no smaller space appears between the shade and base, is bad according to this rule of design. Allow a little of the fixture to show or if the lamp vase has a slender neck, this will answer the purpose or rule of having a space of less weight connecting two spaces of same weight. This lamp at lower left may be carried out with a plain colored base or one decorated. I have selected a covered jar of Satsuma and have had the fixture hole bored through the base and lid as well. The base must be of a color that will harmonize with the room. In this lamp I have used a greyed green color for base and the shade in soft violet and yellows, with a black fixture and stand. Use a silk for shade and

line with a warm orange or apricot color. Fringe is a yarn which has been twisted into small rope strands that are caught to the wire at base of shade. This same colored yarn is used as edging for silk on shade.

The light or lamp above is also a bedroom lamp. Pinks, lavender and grey for the color scheme. Crystal beads may be strung with several knots between each bead, and caught at the points. A twisted cord of complementary colors may be used at top.

The center lamp is one to be used in the living room where a large lamp is desired. A silk shade is used in a value of orange, with a complementary green to edges and jade rings. The base may be of the same color as the

(Continued on Page 214)



Satsuma Tea Tiles—W. K. Titze

(See Page 213 for treatment)



## DESIGNING ON LEATHER

*Nellie Hagan*

TEACHING design to Grade and Junior High pupils has meant great effort, and more or less unsatisfactory results. A welcome problem which develops original expression and individuality of technique is leather modeling, or designing on leather. Leather is a material that may be easily adapted to school-room use, and many simple designs may be developed into articles of service and beauty. Its use for strong landscapes and pictorial composition has been growing in vogue, and today is finding increased favor in the art classes of the schools and universities. Designing on leather is popular among students mainly because of the ease with which the art is acquired, the small and inexpensive equipment necessary to do the work, and the richness and beauty of the finished article. It is popular among teachers because it requires good design, it encourages concentration on the relation of motif and background, and teaches the importance of spacing the black and white areas. Also, it is a pleasant change from working on paper. With this in mind, the instructor selected as an art problem the designing of a small mat. There are various methods of manipulating leather, such as carving, incising, tooling, burning and embossing. The last named being the simplest, will be explained here.

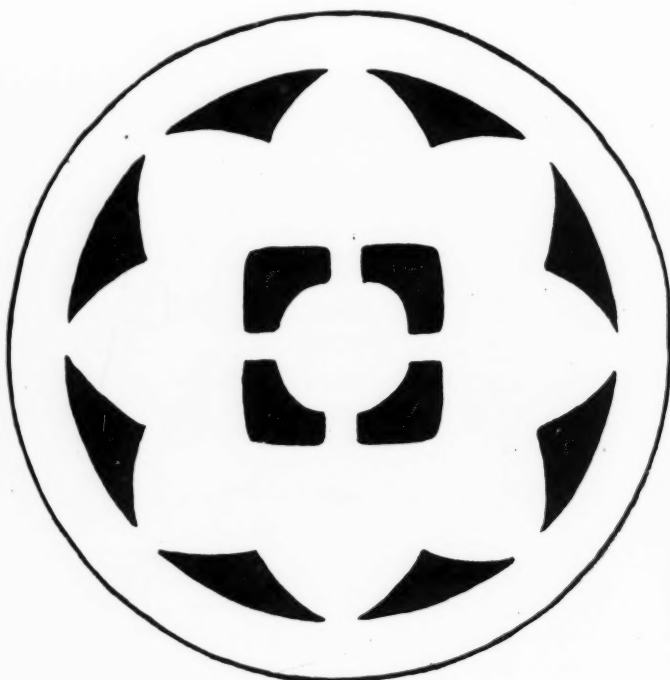
The selection of material for work in any craft is of prime importance, and in leather work it is rather more difficult to distinguish between good and inferior hides than it is to select materials of the proper quality for other art problems. A hide that retains impressions made by indenting with the thumb-nail will usually model well. Sheepskin is not satisfactory, and for this purpose Russia

calf is usually selected. Often a variety of colored leather remnants of various sizes can be bought which are useful and inexpensive for school-room use. Each pupil should have one or two modeling tools as shown in Illustration No. 1. Also a piece of calfskin five by five inches. They may be left square or shaped into a circle, and when finished, will serve as a mat on a desk or writing table.

Thus equipped, we are ready to begin the exercise. The first step in designing on leather is to create a unit of light and dark values which will not only be interesting but will also produce a pleasing effect on the finished piece. The pupils were allowed a choice of imaginary flower forms or geometrical figures to be arranged inside a five inch circle or square. The designs were first executed in charcoal, the pupils remembering that the light parts represent the design left in relief by the process, and the spaces and background represent the parts pressed down by the modeling tool. The leather was dampened on the under side with a wet sponge, and the design was transferred to the smooth side by tracing with a hard pencil. The impression thus made will be clear enough to be easily followed; carbon paper should not be used as a means of transfer. In tracing on leather it is best to make the forms a little larger than desired when finished, for there is a tendency to encroach upon the parts in relief. After the outline is clearly traced, make a firm line around the design, using the sharp-pointed tool. Now, the worker may proceed with the "laying down" of the background thus raising the design in relief. The "laying down" is done by pressing heavily and evenly with the broad-pointed tool all around the lines and working toward the part to be raised. Continue in this way until the entire space has been covered. Always work in the direction of the fibres so that the leather will take the pressing in a smooth and glossy manner. When finished, the background should present a smooth, even texture. If a higher relief is desired, this may be accomplished by pressing more heavily, always working toward the part to be raised. The leather must be repeatedly dampened during the process, to keep it in a pliable condition.



Illustration No. 1





## SATSUMA TEA-TILES

W. K. Titze

(See Illustrations on Page 211)

ONE of the many items shown in the catalogue of a Western china supply company, is the Satsuma tea-tile. These tiles are either square or round and come in several sizes. They are on little ball feet, and can be picked up from the table with ease.

The designs shown this month, are two that will please, one for those who still like the old-fashioned tea party or tea chat while the design of the square tile will appeal to those who place a bit of "Russian" in their tea.

For the circle tile, I suggest a greyed color scheme, with either a black ground or a white gold ground with black outlined design and black band at edge. Use greyed greens,



There are several points which should be impressed upon pupils doing this work: that modeling requires good designing; that too much detail should always be avoided; the importance of treating the material in a flat and decorative manner, striving only for enough detail to break the monotonous spaces and to add interest to the finished work. The class quickly grasped these essentials. Although the first pieces were far from perfect, there was an abundance of original expression and the work was fascinating to the pupils and teacher alike.

♦ ♦ ♦



violets to which add some rose and blues that have been greyed or white added to them.

The "Sovereign of Fire", I am sure, will keep the tea hot. Use different values of green for the face, shoulder and hand. Outline the entire design in black. Introduce some spots of orange red while the deepest flames may be made by first coat of Liquid Bright Gold and covered, the second fire, with Ruby lustre.

♦ ♦ ♦

#### LAMPS—W. K. Titze

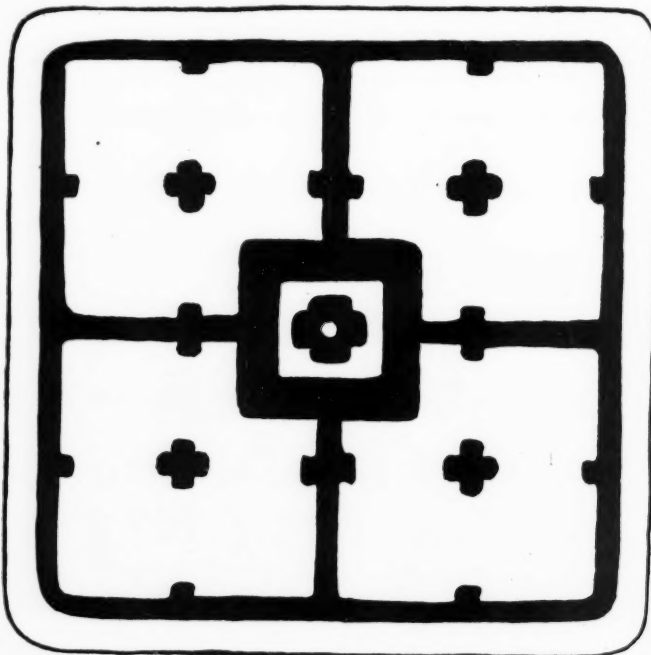
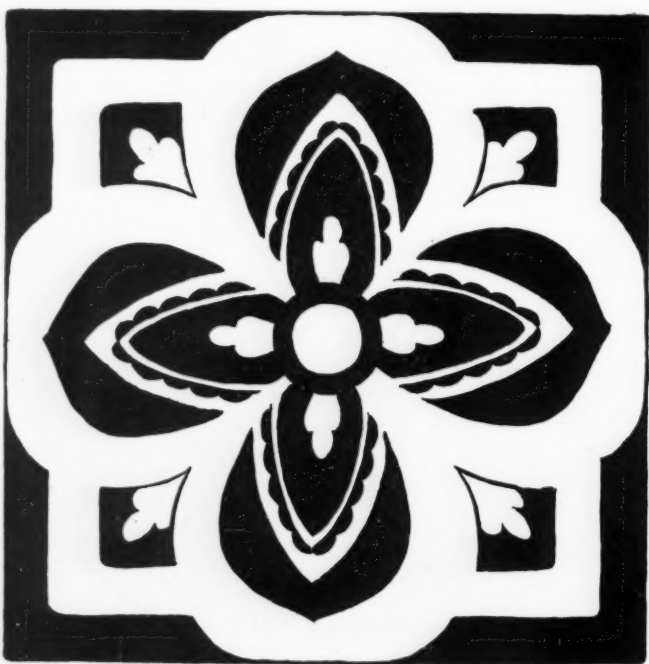
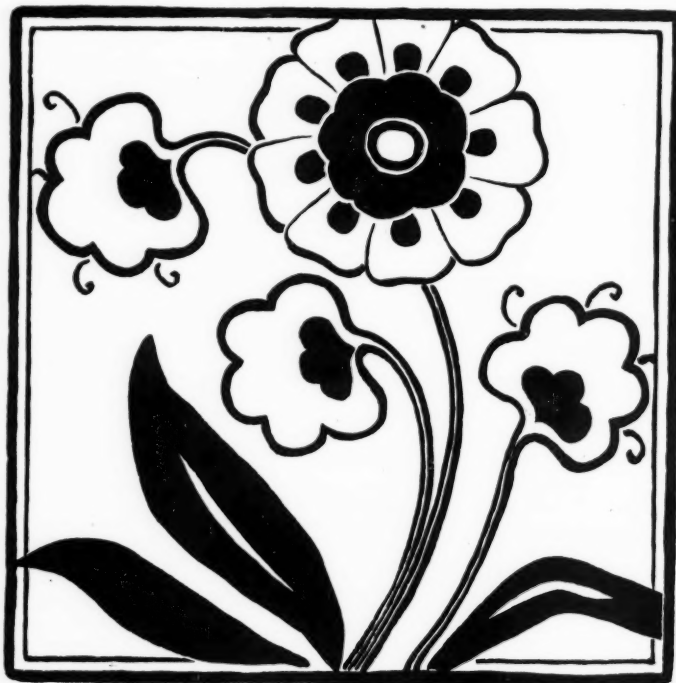
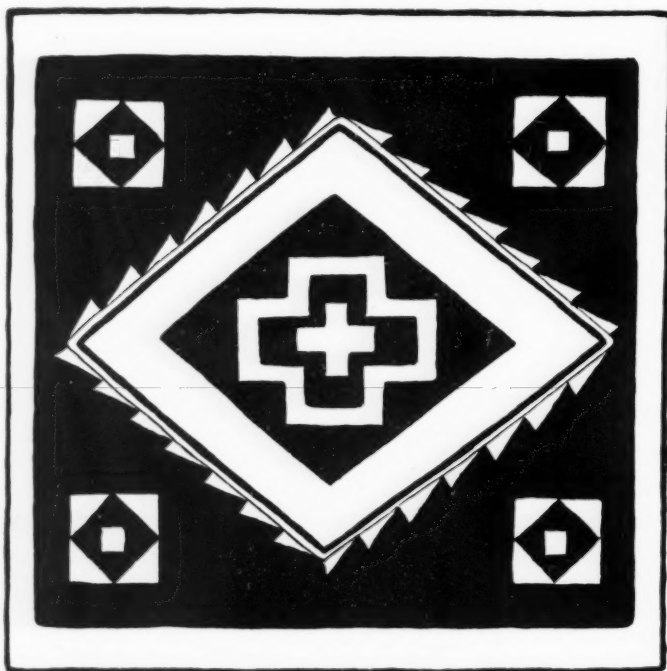
(Continued from page 211)

binding of the shade with decoration of a deeper value of the same color. This may have a black fixture or an antique green.

The lamp with the square base, is a pleasing one where a much decorated base is used. Keep all shades simple, when the base is the attracting note.

The upper center bracket lamp, is pleasing for a small hallway. The bracket is of wrought iron with a prism of amethyst. The shade is of the popular batik paper and the edges are bound with tape, ribbon or braid of a good color that harmonizes with the balance of the hallway..

The shields are to be used for living room wall lights. One may be decorated with an old print and the other with a simple flower arrangement upon parchment paper.



Leather Designs—Nellie Hagan





## GESSO FOR TELEPHONES

*Lauretta Smith*

**G**ESSO is neither a patented trade-mark nor a simplified spelling of an old conversational friend. It is at once as old as Egyptian art and as new as everything which captures the imagination must be. Gesso, then, is one of the more recently re-discovered aids of the home decorator. Both its name and its constituents have varied. Today, the term is usually applied to a commercial mixture of whiting and glue, sometimes used in natural color and painted after it is dry, sometimes mixed with color before it is applied. The articles described here were decorated with colored gesso, a mixture permitting a double treatment: first, as paint; second, as modelling clay. Egyptian artists used a mixture with the properties of gesso in decorating mummy cases with likenesses of men and gods, figures stiff and rigid, with muscles and draperies molded.

Many of the masters of the early Siennese school in Italy achieved remarkable effects in relief by using what is now known by the Italian term, gesso. Tradition has it that when the baths of the Roman Emperor Titus were exhumed under Pontifex Leo X, the Italian artists were amazed at the beautiful reliefs in plaster which were found. This tradition further credits Raphael and his assistants with carrying out the experiments resulting in the discovery of a mixture which produced similar results. Gesso was popular, and was used extensively throughout Italy for wall decorations, on wooden panels, and on ecclesiastical altars and crosses. Soon artists used it on canvas as an underlay for gold; halos, jewelry, and crowns were raised and modelled with gesso, and then gilded. French artists further extended its use to armor and war saddles. Still later, gesso made possible remarkable relief work on furniture. In recent times, Burne-Jones and Walter Crane popularized the use of the mixture in England, and today in the United

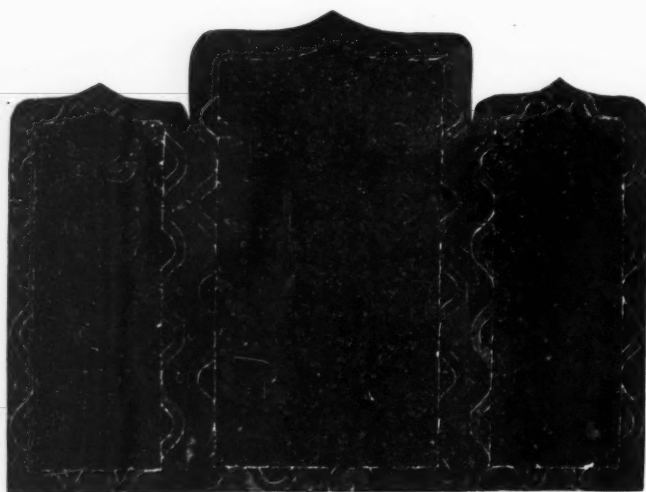
States home decorators are finding gesso a readily workable and effective decorative medium.

The American woman is truly thankful for all the good offices of her man Friday,—her telephone. But many a distressed look at the telephone corner has convinced her that the price of great utility has been beauty. It would be difficult to convince her that beauty and utility go hand in hand where telephone instruments are concerned. And the telephone directory, essential and convenient as it is, is neither a thing of beauty nor a joy for ever. The telephone corner, indeed, presents a trying aesthetic problem, and requires careful "adjustment" to make it attractive. The sketch here presented shows one solution by which the telephone and its "furniture" are turned into objects decorative as well as useful.

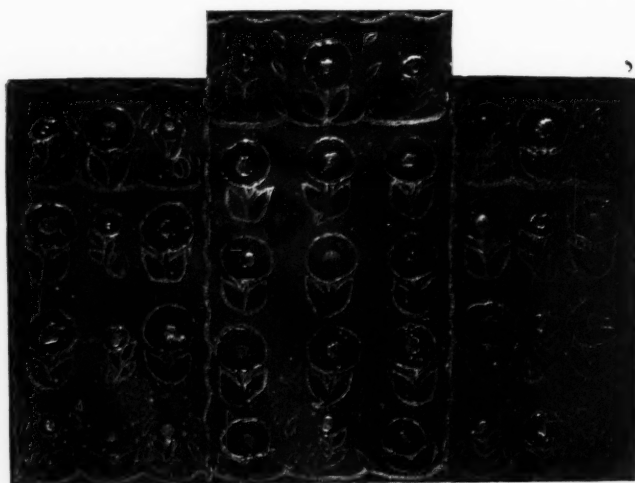
Four colors of gesso are used in the plates illustrated: Neutral, Red, Yellow, and Blue. With these four, the following colors are obtained: Green, by mixing Yellow and Blue; Brown, by mixing equal parts of Red, Yellow, and Blue; Black by adding to Brown some Red and a good deal of Blue. Anyone who has worked with water-color in a schoolroom will have no trouble in mixing these colors. In using them, one must remember that they change slightly when dry. Red, Brown, Black, and Blue darken. Yellow changes very little. Green dries slightly bluer and darker. Flesh color is very difficult to make light enough. A combination of Neutral, Red, and Yellow will approximate the desired color, but the mixture must be lightened when dry with water-color or oil paint. Gesso is semi-liquid and flows from a brush much as water-color does. It is well to start these designs with a No. 3 water-color brush. Larger brushes can be used when one is used to handling gesso.

*The Telephone Screen.* Wire frames for screens of the Gothic design here illustrated are on the market. If the commercial product is not available, the frames may be cut from stiff cardboard, bound by bias strips or tape, and sewn together at the adjacent edges. The screen should stand about an inch higher than the telephone. For the cover, cut silk cloth a quarter of an inch larger than the frame, pin it securely to the frame, and sew it on tight. Brown silk is recommended. Cut two pieces of paper the size of the Gothic panels. Trim off an inch margin from all sides and use the remaining pieces for the design. Draw in all the main lines of the design on this pattern. Do not draw in the small details. Use a ruler for the straight lines.

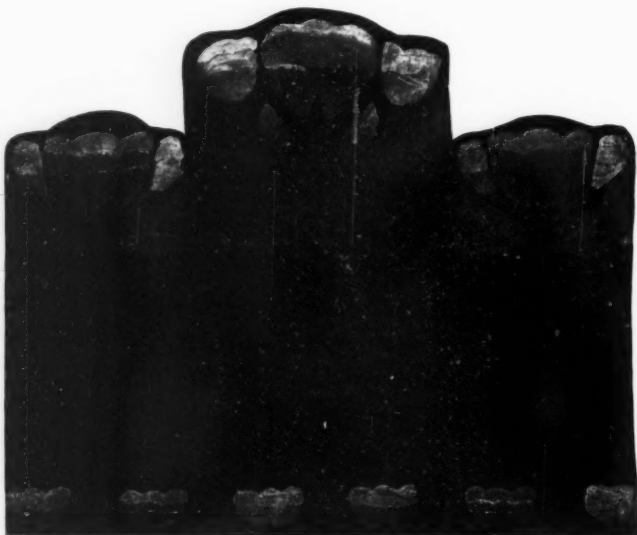




Virgie Mitchell



Pansy Williams



Ella B. Russell



Beatrice Ryland



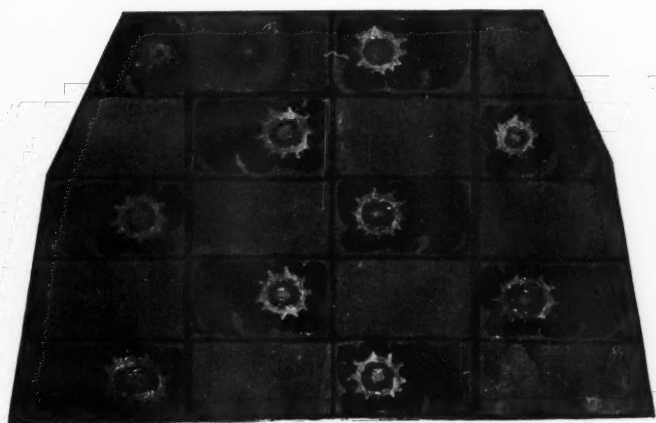
Kitty Mason



Adeline Winston

Telephone Screens in Gesso by Pupils of Teachers Training School, Cheyney, Pa., Laura Wheeler, Instructor





Margaret Mosby



Sarah D. Cooper

After designing on paper, re-draw on the silk, using either a soft pencil or tailor's chalk. Now try the gesso on a sample of the silk. If the gesso is too wet, the glue may spread and form a superfluous and transparent edge. Dry a little gesso in a dish; then try again. If the edge still forms, the outside lines may be prepared with glue or melted beeswax. Use a sharpened match or pin and run the glue just inside the outside lines of the design. Let this dry and then paint over these lines with gesso. Only the long lines need be prepared in this way. Dark brown cloth, and some light silks do not need this preparation.

To paint the screen, first put in the main lines, which are of Neutral. These may be trued by running a nut-pick or hair pin along them. Next put in the dark parts. Let each color dry before putting another beside it. Then put in flowers and figures. The latter may be slightly modelled with a brush. The face should be completely painted in flesh color. After it is dry, lighten the color with water-color, then paint in the hair with Brown gesso. The cheeks may be reddened and the eyes put in with water-color. It is also wise to lighten the arms. When painting garments stroke in the direction in which the cloth naturally falls. Now let the screen dry thoroughly. For window panes, if light cloth is used, darken the windows before putting in the panes. To do this, mix Brown gesso with water, and paint the windows as with water-color. Let this dry and then put in the panes with Blue and Neutral gesso mixed. Lines may be drawn as guides to keep these small panes straight, but they are not needed if one watches the straight lines already put in. A little irregularity will not detract. Let the completed screen dry thoroughly. Do not try to hasten the process with heat. Cover the back of the screen with silk; finally, bind the edges with gold braid.

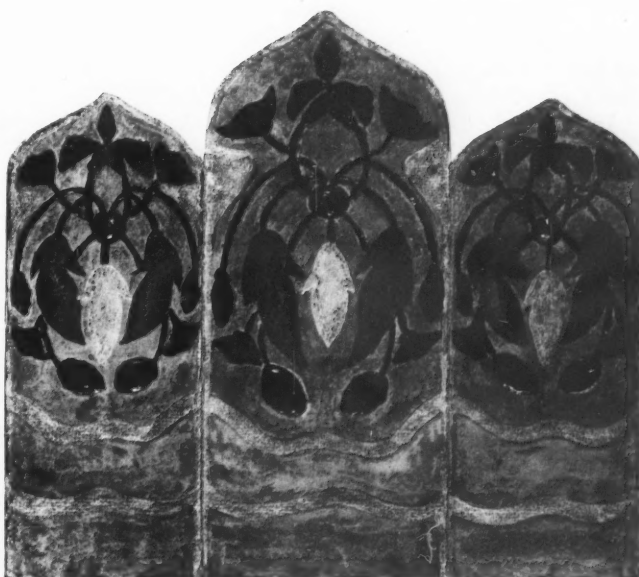
*The Lamp Shade.* The design may be applied either to parchment or silk. Gesso applied to this design gives a pleasing silhouette over a light. But the design may be done with thinned oil paint on parchment, if one prefers transparent treatment.

*The Telephone Book Cover.* The cover itself is a slip-jacket of silk one-quarter inch larger on each side than the book cover; the ends fold back two inches under the binding. The design is placed in a rectangle in the center of the top cover. It is applied as on the telephone screen.

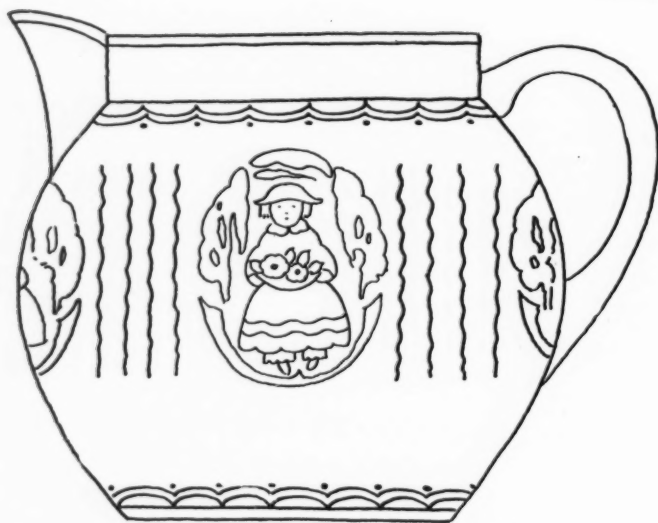
The gesso can be purchased from any firm dealing extensively in school or art supplies.



Lucille Taylor



Viola Jefferson



## BEGINNERS' CORNER

Jetta Ehlers . . . 53 Washington Terrace, East Orange, N.J

### THE USE OF FIGURES IN DECORATION

WITH the whole natural world upon which to draw for inspiration in designing, it seems strange that china decorators go on and on using only the flora as motifs, when all sorts of fascinating things are to be found outside of that field. Animals of all sorts, the many, many birds, fishes, landscapes, and that ever interesting subject, the human figure, are some of the material we may use, and it is the latter I wish to consider with you a bit.

The design which is given as the problem this month has a certain element of quaintness about it. Things of this sort are very successful as a decoration for children's sets or for a service for the summer cottage. An odd pitcher, too, is a good piece for this type of motif, so because most women adore pitchers, and never have too many, we will take this shape upon which to apply the design. The coloring for things of this character should be kept very fresh and crisp. Avoid muddy greens or neutral tones. Keep the whole keyed high for this will add greatly to the charm of the work. Things may be full of color yet so well balanced that there is perfect harmony. Upon a pitcher one may indulge in a bit of gaiety that would not be appropriate on a formal dinner service.

In adapting the figure to design avoid any over-elaboration. The more simply it is treated the better. In reducing it to pattern, which is of course the thing one must do, keep away from the naturalistic treatment, just as you would in using any other subject. In the simplest possible way suggest the form and then break this up into interesting spaces exactly as one would do in conventionalizing a flower. In the little figure given, variety of shapes and spaces, some large, some small, were thought out, and the whole unit kept within the confines of a given shape which was an oval. This, as always, gives decorative value.

The motif may be used in several ways. It may be repeated to make a border with something to hold it together, or the unit may be used simply as a medallion. On a large piece two rows of the border could be used, placing the little figure under the wavy lines on the lower repeat. It could be carried out in gold, making the dress, the hat, the hair and the feet solid with the rest in line. For table service the medallion treatment would be best, with the bands done in some good color.

To apply the design make first a careful tracing of the motif. This should always be done with care, but it is especially important in drawing the human figure. A leaf or flower which varies from the original a bit is permissible, but eyes, or noses, or mouths that stray off of the line are quite another thing. Divide the china having one unit on each side and one under the spout. If the pitcher is a large one, more wavy lines may be used to connect the units, or more of the units may be used. Do not place the band so that the pitcher will be divided in half. Have a larger margin at the bottom than at the top. If you reverse this the border will have the effect of dropping off, which is bad arrangement. If, however, you choose a shape which is wider at the bottom the border will look well placed at the base, with the simple scalloped bands used at the top.

Fasten the tracing in place on the china and slip under it a piece of graphite impression paper, and then go over the drawing with a tracing point. A few words about this most simple process may not be amiss. In a long experience of teaching and working I have found nothing so satisfactory to fasten a tracing to china as adhesive plaster. By this I do not mean the gummed paper which comes on a spool, but the sort of plaster surgeons use to fasten dressings and bandages. Small strips of this will fasten a tracing securely in place and may be pulled up easily and used repeatedly, leaving little, if any, mark on the china. Then a word about the impression paper. Of all materials we use for this step in the work nothing is so hopeless as heavy carbon paper. It smudges badly and though this may be wiped off with turpentine after the drawing has been fixed with India ink, the very greasiness in the beginning makes it difficult to make an ink line over it. The graphite paper is quite different, it does not smudge and one may make a much more delicate, but clear tracing with it. In working with it mark the wrong side in some way, a small cross made with tempera white is excellent, and you will save yourself much trouble and annoyance by being able to tell at a glance if the



Florets—Jetta Ehlers



right side is down. Most of us have had the experience of going over a design only to find the wrong side of the impression paper had been next the china, and alas! no tracing.

Still another thing of importance is the tracing point. The ideal one is an agate tracing point which may be obtained of any dealer in supplies for china painting. A poor one is a lead pencil unless it is a very hard one and even that is not to be recommended. The pencil soon spoils the line of the drawing, especially if many repeats have to be made, and no pencil will make as fine a line as the agate point. Tracing papers vary greatly and for special types of work one may prefer certain kinds. I think the very best for general work is not paper but architects' tracing cloth. This is very tough and will stand up under repeated tracings where a paper would cut. Then for very fine work there is the transparent glossy tracing paper sometimes called raisin paper. This does not take pencil well but with a fine pen and India ink it is possible to trace the finest drawings. What is known as American tracing paper is a good all around kind, but for an altogether satisfactory thing nothing is quite so good as architects' tracing cloth.

The colors used for the problem are Yellow Brown with a touch of Carnation added which is applied in a very light wash for the flesh. The hat, basket, hair and the shoes are Black. The dress is Royal Blue about half strength with bands of Violet. A warm Red Violet should be used for best results. The flower at the left in the basket is also Violet. The other one is Rose, and the leaves are Apple Green. The collar and the pantalettes are left white but should have an outline to hold them, the blue of the dress being perhaps the best as black would "star" them a little too much. The cloud shapes above the hat may be also outlined with the same blue. The suggestion of a path is of

Green to which is added a little Meissen Brown. The trees should be painted with a mixture of Royal Green and Apple Green, using one part of the first to two of the Apple Green. The bands and the wavy lines between the units are of Royal Blue and there should be a band of the same down the back of the handle. The features are done with Black and are really only dots, and should not be made too heavy. Care must be taken to keep the values nearly the same or some parts of the design will "pop" out at you. For instance if one should make the trees much stronger than the figure the attention would be directed to that part of the design and the little figure would lose in importance. The same would be true of the reverse. Lay the color in very cleanly in flat washes avoiding any fussing over it when once laid.

To sum up: be careful in placing the bands to not divide the pitcher in half. A wider space left at bottom than at top will usually be successful. *Do not* use neutral or muddy colors on designs of this kind, clear fresh coloring is more in keeping with the character of the decoration. *Do not* use the figure in too naturalistic a manner. Translate it into pattern.

♦ ♦ ♦

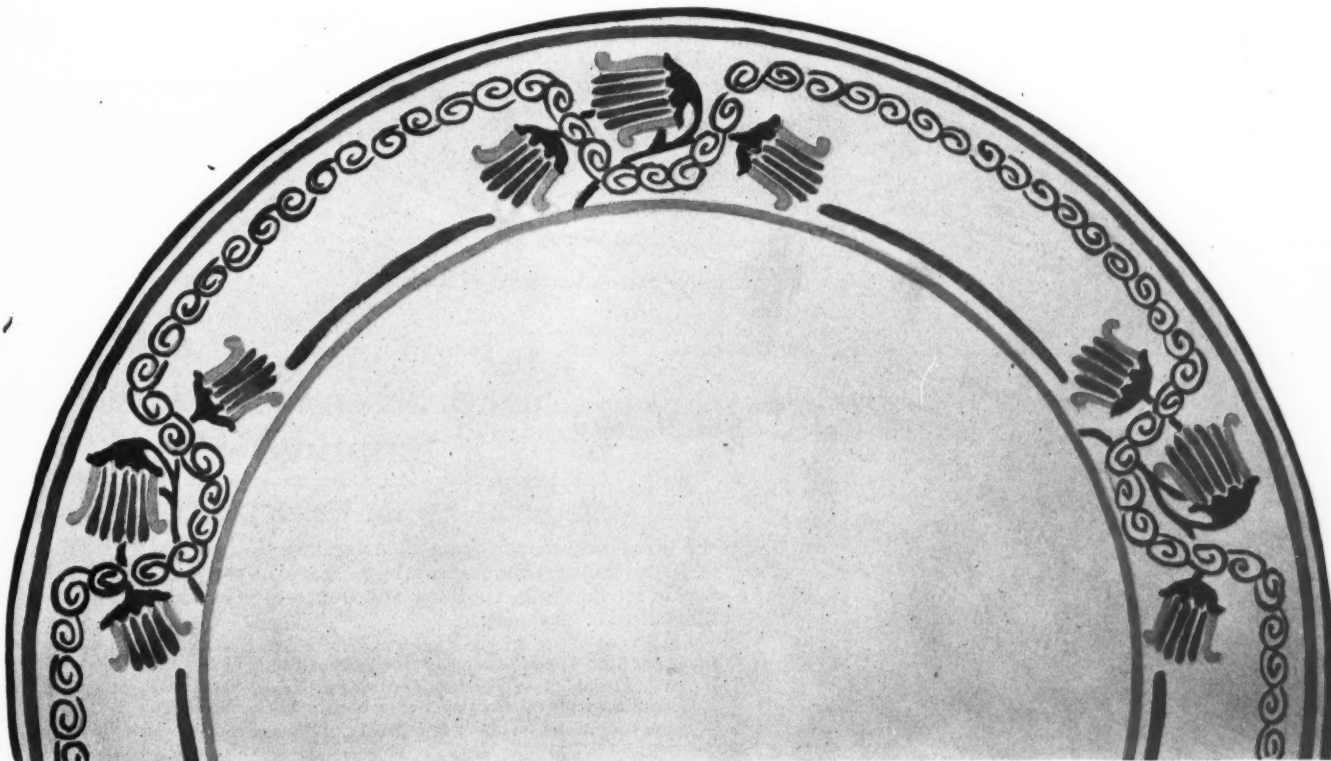
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\$100

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May 15th, 1927

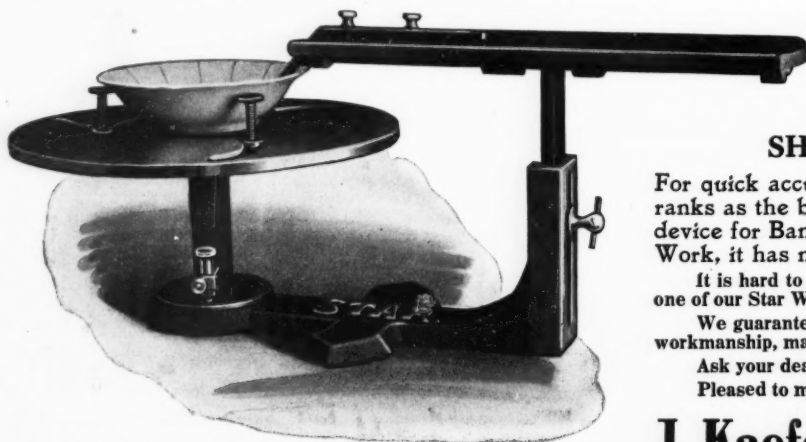
For rules, apply to New York League of Women Voters, Room 5017, 100 E. 45th St., New York, N. Y.



Plate—Olga Berger



Plate Design for Gold and Enamels—May Warner



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